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## Educational Writings

### I. REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

*New materials of instruction.*—*The Nineteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*<sup>1</sup> devotes two hundred pages to the presentation of material collected from teachers in different parts of the United States who have worked out new materials for their classes. The lessons which are included in this yearbook are in form, for the most part, for immediate use by classes. They range in subject-matter from primary reading to lessons on how to study designed for college students. Lessons in geography, history, mathematics, and civics are included, and concrete materials from a large number of different localities illustrate how teachers can prepare new material.

The introduction which sets forth the purpose of this report points out that teachers are commonly mere transmitters of knowledge and not makers of new material for school use. The conservatism of the American textbook method of teaching is commented on, and boards of education and school officers are urged to give attention to the possibilities of developing among teachers a very different attitude toward their work. The committee which prepared the yearbook aims in this introduction to show the importance of organizing a permanent agency to stimulate the creation of new materials of instruction.

The discussion of this yearbook before the National Society for the Study of Education resulted in a continuation of the committee with authorization for the enlargement of the work so that lessons in special subjects may be prepared and published in later yearbooks or in various school publications.

Perhaps the most significant single item in the report of the committee is the resolution in which it recommends a method of securing the time and talent for a fuller development of the type of lessons illustrated in the yearbook. The resolutions are as follows:

"WHEREAS, The rapid development of ideas and discoveries in the modern world bring to light many matters which should at once be introduced into the classrooms of public schools; and

"WHEREAS, The organization of schools as at present common in this country creates too little expectation that teachers will discover and formulate new material of instruction as a part of their regular routine; therefore be it

"Resolved, That in the judgment of the National Society for the Study of Education it is highly important that there be set up in every school system some

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I*, "New Materials of Instruction." Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Co., 1920. Pp. 194. \$1.10.

agency or agencies for the formulation of materials of instruction not to be found in existing textbooks, such, for example, as exercises on local industries, geography, history, and natural surroundings; and be it further

*"Resolved,* That in the judgment of this Society boards of education should be appealed to, to grant to productive officers some time for work of this kind. The methods suggested for meeting such a request are partial release from routine for a period of months or explicit recognition of such productive work in making promotions; and be it further

*"Resolved,* That publishers be urged to recognize the desirability of putting much more material into the form now commonly known as supplementary reading, to the end that textbook teaching may be easily supplemented by the introduction of current material." [Page 18.]

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*Instruction of gifted children.*—The second part of the *Nineteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*<sup>1</sup> is devoted to a treatment of the experiments which are being tried in this country in the effort to ascertain how many gifted children there are in each grade and how they can best be carried through the curriculum. Scientific investigations have shown with increasing clearness in recent years that there are marked individual differences among children in all of the grades. These individual differences are so great that children in one grade sometimes show abilities equal to those of children in much higher grades. Associated with these gifted children there are always children of normal ability and children of inferior ability. The tendency to separate children into grades according to their ability is steadily gaining supporters, and this yearbook will undoubtedly accelerate that movement. The discussion is significant, not only because of the support which it gives to this special movement, but also because it is in effect a criticism of the present graded system in our public schools. If we cannot add to the rigid grading which is now common some device that will give individual children larger opportunities to achieve all that they are capable of achieving in the schools, there will continue to be a serious waste of human energy and of opportunity. The emphasis upon the need of special training for gifted children will therefore undoubtedly result in a careful reconsideration of the whole problem of grading children in the schools.

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*Visual education.*—The first number of a new magazine<sup>2</sup> edited by a group of educators who have entered the field of visual education will undoubtedly attract wide attention. The schools have been increasingly using moving pictures and lantern slides as means of giving instruction. The difficulty that has arisen in the past is the difficulty of securing proper materials for exhibition. The commercial concerns are not disposed to devote themselves to the preparation of high-grade pictures. A corporation has been formed in Chicago with academic men at its head and with a large corps of directors and advisers who are going to do every-

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<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II*, "Classroom Problems in the Education of Gifted Children," by Theodore S. Henry. Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Co., 1920. Pp. 125. \$1.00.

<sup>2</sup> *Visual Education*, I (January, 1920), 1-40. Chicago: Society for Visual Education, 327 South LaSalle Street. \$1.00 a year.